



# THE GREEN SCENE

## Southern California Storms Cause Havoc in Parks



John Anson Ford Amphitheatre seats covered to prevent damage

The recent rain storms caused a bit of havoc in our Los Angeles County parks, but through it all the Department staff stepped up to the plate and managed to resolve all issues. Department staff provided updates to the Department's Safety Office who provided the Office of Emergency Management with regular updates. The Chief Executive Office and Board Offices were regularly updated with reports of park damage and closures, and expressed appreciation at the Department's quick action in both communications and efforts in the field.

Parks and Recreation staff had their hands full, with floods, fallen trees and other rain-related damages. Two parks were entirely closed due to the storms.

Whittier Narrows Recreation Area lost a large ash tree and branches were torn down throughout the park. The lake water level rose resulting in many water puddles and muddy areas and forcing the park staff to close on January 20th for the safety of the staff and patrons. The park reopened on January 22nd. Hart Park also temporarily closed due to a power outage and flooding of the parking lot and Hart Hall.

Many areas at Peter F. Schabarum closed down due to the damage of the storms and several areas had to be barricaded. The equestrian rest area experienced a hillside collapse due to failure of a storm drain pipe and the equestrian trail had to be closed due to land slippage and blockage from a broken water pipe.

At other parks, flooding, fallen trees, leaking in buildings, broken power poles, black outs, storm drainage problems and wind damage were issues staff had to contend with quickly and carefully.

Thank you to all staff who played a role in ensuring the safety of the patrons at parks and the safety of other staff. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make repairs quickly, and also to staff providing timely updates; and to Anush Gambaryan for

coordinating with the Office of Emergency Management.



Damage at William S. Hart Park

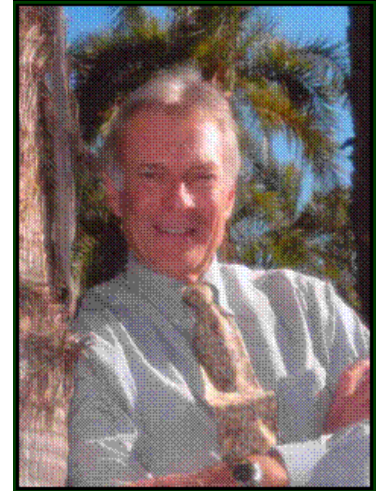
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## Greetings from the Director

Hello! I hope the recent rains and storms have not dampened your resolve to make this a great year. As many of you know, there are fiscal challenges that face us, but the dawn of a new year and also a new decade is a chance to be optimistic and look at the silver lining in our department. Even with our budgetary constraints, we have minimized employee and program cuts. And thanks to Quimby funding, we have recently been able to open up a brand new park for the West Creek community in the North Agency. This is remarkable considering today's trying times. This year and onwards, we also look forward to cultivating our relationships with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, who, with the Board approved merger of OPS and the Sheriff's Department, are now in charge of patrolling our parks and keeping them safe. We thank OPS for their support and outstanding efforts through the years!



*Russ Guiney, Director*

## Richard Rioux Park Supervisor Doug Newell Recognized for Outstanding Service



Department employee Doug Newell, a Recreation Services Supervisor at Richard Rioux Memorial Park in Stevenson Ranch, was recognized with a commendation by Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich at the West Ranch Town Council Meeting on December 2, 2009.

Supervisor Antonovich presented Doug, a Castaic resident and 8-year veteran with the Department of Parks and Recreation with a scroll recognizing his "dedicated service" and "contributions for the benefit of all citizens of Los Angeles County."

For the past five years, Doug has supervised the 16-acre Richard Rioux Memorial Park, a County park with tennis courts, horseshoe pits, playing fields, a basketball court, playground and picnic areas. Along with sports leagues for adults and children, Doug has also introduced such annual events as the Easter

Sunrise Service, a health fair and a toy giveaway during Christmas. He has also been instrumental in bringing other special events to the community such as skateboard contests and several holiday observances.



## Ted Watkins Aquatics Training Center (TWATC)



On Tuesday, December 15, 2009, Southern California Edison presented the Aquatics Foundation of Metropolitan Los Angeles (AFMLA) with a \$20,000 Community Building grant in support of the Ted Watkins Aquatics Training Center (TWATC). Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and the Board of Supervisors recognized the new partnership between County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, AFMLA and Southern California Edison as a collaboration between public and private organizations.

In August 2009, AFMLA applied for a grant in the amount of \$24,850 for the enhancement of the TWATC. The grant will assist the center in providing career development opportunities to inner-city young adults in the field of lifeguarding and scuba diving. There are municipalities, colleges and universities within the County of Los Angeles that have swimming pool operations and several beaches and harbors who employ lifeguards and scuba divers. However, many who apply for these positions from the inner-city often do not possess the ability to meet the swim requirements.

The TWATC is designed to accommodate up to 15 students in a total of 19 aquatic training classes which include emergency response, first aid and CPR, lifeguard management, and sport safety training. A separate scuba training course is intended to hold up to 10 students and will provide six weeks of pool and classroom training including open water training. The trainees will be prepared physically in aquatics and life saving techniques and will also learn how to create a resume as well as gain valuable interview techniques from local community experts and AFMLA career professionals. Los Angeles County Scuba and the Department of Parks and Recreation will provide the scuba classes.

The goal of the center is to increase job opportunities and professional training options for low-income adults. The grant enables a program that will build a new class of professionals and provide security for individuals and families throughout south Los Angeles.

## Facilities Operations and Crafts Manager II Greg Harrington Retires After 31 Years of Service



Top Row, Left to Right:  
Chief Deputy Director John Wicker, Director Russ Guiney, Regional Facilities Deputy Director Hayden Sohm, Facilities Operations & Crafts Manager Dwight LaCroix, Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich  
Front Row, Left to Right:  
Rosie Harrington, Danielle Harrington, Doris Harrington and Greg Harrington.

Facilities Operations and Crafts Manager II Gregory P. Harrington will be retired at the end of January 2010 after more than 31 years with the department. He has held the positions of Painter, Painter Supervisor, Building Crafts Supervisor, and Manager of Facilities Operations.

Since 1998, Greg has spearheaded a very successful at-risk youth program where youth participants employed by the Department assist with general park improvements. The youth program received two Commissioners Awards for their contribution on the Mayberry Park Skate Park Project in 2002 and Loma Alta Equestrian Center Renovation Project in 2003. Through this successful program several youth workers have been able to find permanent jobs within the Department of Parks and Recreation and other County departments. Greg started working at the Regional Facilities Agency in 2002 and continued to oversee the crafts division for both the East and Regional Agencies for many years.

Greg headed several major projects for the Department, such as the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area Bicycle Racing Track (BMX) Rehabilitation Development Project; a multi-million dollar beautification project at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area; a department wide replacement of playground equipment; the extension of the East Agency Headquarters offices; renovations and improvements at Franklin D. Roosevelt Park, Rueben F. Salazar Park, Saybrook Park, and Belvedere Park.

Greg was recognized at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting on January 12, 2009 for his many years of service and numerous contributions to the County of Los Angeles. His wife Rosie, daughters Doris and Danielle and close friend Rosie Maloof attended the presentation.

More than 200 Parks and Recreation staff, family and friends attended his luau-themed retirement party on Thursday, January 28th at the Arboretum and Botanic Garden. Greg received a number of proclamations and presentations from the First Supervisorial District, ISD and co-workers. The highlight of the event was a beautiful video tribute featuring Greg's co-workers and family members. Greg was presented with a beautiful surfboard especially made for him. We wish Greg a happy retirement and our best wishes!



## Define Your Image and Read Mentors Kids in literacy and physical Activity



The Department of Parks and Recreation and Director Russ Guiney recently held a joint press conference with Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, USC Athletic Department and Athletic Director Mike Garrett to announce Define Your Image and Read marketing campaign that will partner USC students and athletes to mentor 122<sup>nd</sup> Street Elementary School children at Athens Park and the USC campus. In addition to encouraging physical activity and fitness, the program will tutor children on reading

and literacy skills. The program was created and is spearheaded by Maritiza Anderson, Department of Parks and Recreation Marketing Analyst.

## It's In Your Hands



In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau will issue a call to action for every resident of our nation: "Be Counted." It is vital that everyone participates in the Census count. What is the Census?

- The Census is a count of everyone living in the United States every 10 years
- The Census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution
- Your participation in the census is required by law
- It takes less than 10 minutes to complete
- Federal Law protects the personal information you share during the census
- Census data is used to distribute \$300 billion in Federal Funds to local, state and tribal governments each year
- The U.S. Census Bureau will be mailing every household in the U.S. a short form questionnaire in February/March, 2010 that takes 10 minutes or less to complete

As part of this Department's commitment to help spread the word, we have coordinated the acquisition of approximately 2,500 Frisbees from the United States Census Bureau for distribution this year at various park special events and programs. Please contact Mark Lazarus at (213) 738-4729 if you have a special event planned for 2010. You will get the free give away Frisbees and the U.S. Census Bureau will staff a booth with pertinent census information for the public.

Please help us get the word out — 2010 U.S. Census — "Stand-Up and Be Counted"!

## HIGH FIVE!

For Those Who Go Above and Beyond...

You have gone above and beyond with your concerns about the success of the Bow-Wows and Meows event. The last 2 years working with **Hart Park** on the event have been an entirely different experience for me... for the better! Thank you. Your entire staff are always a pleasure to work with. Everyone is so friendly and helpful. **Al** was a great comfort to me as he explained the parking program. **Cheryl** is always kind on the phone. If I had to rate my experience working with Hart Park, I would give you all two thumbs up (more if we had more thumbs). Once again **Norm Phillips**, THANK YOU very much.

*Yvonne Allbee  
Bow-Wows and Meows President  
Newhall, CA*

I want to thank you for supporting the **L.A. County Junior Golf Program**. My three children all participated at Santa Anita Golf Course. They were excited to go every single morning. The staff were professional, fun, encouraging and competent. If your objective in supporting this program is to provide a positive outlet for children in the County and to foster future golfers, please know that your objective is met. I only wish we had known about this sooner!

*Caroline Novak  
Arcadia, CA*

Our family would like to thank all the coaches, and supporters of the **L.A. County Junior Golf Program**. This was our first year doing the golf program, and our son Nathan just loved it. Your coaches are awesome. This was a great experience. Thank you for the chance to participate in the L.A. County Junior Golf Program. This program was unique, and our son learned valuable life skills, respect, integrity, character and honor. We can't wait until next summer to do it again.

*Kathryn Ramirez  
North Hollywood, CA*

**Loma Alta Park** has been a major staple for child care as well as recreational activities for our children. We are extremely happy with the high quality of care that the teachers and the Recreation Supervisors provide for our children. The **Tiny Tots Program** has been a Godsend to us. Not only has the program made quality child care/preschool affordable, the high level of academics and didactic knowledge that the staff gives to our child is extraordinary. We feel confident that she will excel in Kindergarten because of the amazing foundation that has been instilled in her through the Tiny Tots Program at Loma Alta Park.

*Mr. & Mrs. Polard  
Loma Alta, CA*

## GIVE Someone a HIGH FIVE!

Do you know someone in our Department who deserves special recognition? Maybe you were on a tight deadline and that person helped you meet it. Maybe you were having a tough work day and that person helped you beat it. You know who those people are, the ones who go above and beyond. Help us recognize them. Email their name and a short paragraph of why they deserve a High Five! to [iperius@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:iperius@parks.lacounty.gov) and we'll do our best to include them in the High Five! column of The Green Scene.



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